



## **CASE STATEMENT**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Glen Lake Association (GLA) seeks to support and permanently endow the Glen Lake Boat Wash. Located on Day Forest Road, there is one Boat Wash which services the entire Glen Lake/Crystal River Watershed. As boating surges in popularity nationwide and the volume of seasonal residents/visitors in our area continues to increase, the growing number of watercraft entering our Watershed is putting our water quality at risk. The GLA Leadership finds it essential to act now to upgrade Boat Wash equipment, increase labor coverage, and educate all boat users on their responsibility to protect our pristine water.

### **BACKGROUND**

GLA saw early on the value and importance of investing in scientific means to protect our Watershed. Beginning in 1995, environmentally conscious Glen Lake Volunteers worked with Glen Arbor Township to become the first township in Michigan to obtain a Boat Wash ordinance. The Boat Wash equipment and operations were established to safeguard our waters from potential destructive invasive species-both plant and animal as well as viral and bacterial. Since inception, this free service has eliminated contaminants from watercraft and associated equipment. The Boat Wash operates with five paid staff, May through October, 13 hours a day, seven days a week. While the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) owns the land, GLA provides all the equipment and labor to manage the cleaning station effectively and efficiently. In 2021 alone, 4,200+ boats were screened through the Boat Wash!

### **THE PROBLEM**

Over the span of 26 years since the Boat Wash was established, tens of thousands of water vessels have been launched. Whether for fishing, waterskiing, canoeing, sailing, jet skiing, kayaking, or rowing, visitors from as near as Traverse City and as far as Hawaii have been attracted to the beautiful blue water of Glen Lake. In fact, according to Traverse City Tourism, Cherry Capital Airport saw 112,926 incoming and outgoing airline passengers in the month of July 2021. This is 22% higher than any previous July! Based on population growth trends and neighboring lakes' invasive species concerns, including the highly detrimental Eurasian watermilfoil, GLA's current Boat Wash configuration requires upgrades and improvements to meet increased boating demand. The Boat Wash is GLA's first line of defense from invasive species entering our Watershed. Biologists acknowledge, once invasive species disrupt an ecosystem it is impossible to recapture the original pristine water quality. Therefore, it is critical to invest in the Boat Wash today, to avoid risking exponential costs of remediation in the future.

As a responsible measure, specific data has been collected and tracked since 2005 ranging from motors flushed, mussels found, number of fishing boats vs. pleasure boats and aquatic plants removed. In the last five years, the number of boats moving through GLA's Boat Wash increased 33% from 3,152 to 4,217. The total number of boats serviced from 2005 thru 2021 is 51,408.

## **SOLUTION**

Streamlining and improving Boat Wash operations to protect our lake at the highest level possible is the solution. This will significantly reduce pressure from the mounting population/watercraft volume. To accomplish this, GLA has identified one-time equipment upgrades and infrastructure improvements which will modernize the Boat Wash.

The need for increased staffing at a competitive wage is imperative to ensure adequate coverage for smooth operations and appropriate education. Both the Glen Lake and Crystal River shorelines are experiencing record numbers of new property owners and visitors, thus rigorous education of these population segments on the importance of the Boat Wash program is a critical proactive step to protect the water.

Modernized equipment, increased labor rates, education, and newcomer orientation are considered best practice solutions to resolve our current challenges. Securing the necessary funds to operate and endow GLA's Boat Wash will ensure these challenges are met with long term, future-oriented solutions. The GLA Leadership unanimously agrees, everything possible must be done now to protect and preserve the cherished water quality of the Glen Lake/Crystal River Watershed.

## **WHY IS GLA EQUIPPED TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM?**

When the Association began in 1945, protecting the environment wasn't part of the mainstream dialogue. Yet, a group of dedicated volunteers had the vision to protect the waters they cherished. Those early residents could not have imagined the science available to us today or the environmental challenges we face.

Throughout the decades GLA has gratefully and proudly garnered awards at both national and state levels for innovative programs and scientific research. As such, our talented staff receives annual requests to speak at seminars throughout the Midwest from respected scientific and environmental organizations. A historic review of our committed volunteers also tells a story of leadership and accomplishment.

In 2020 GLA celebrated 75 years of protecting the Glen Lake/Crystal River Watershed. Continuing throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with the vision our founders set forth, GLA expects to continue to lead in evidence-based strategies for protecting the Glen Lake/Crystal River Watershed, advancing environmental education and sustainable policies, while offering a highly desirable destination for the summer season.

## **HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?**

Since 2017 Boat Wash expenses have been supported by generous individual philanthropy. In fiscal year 2022, GLA will be seeking financial support through a capital project campaign with a goal of funding the Boat Wash in perpetuity. Funds received from this campaign will immediately begin covering costs associated with the Boat Wash. After the project campaign is complete, we expect the GLA Endowment Spending Policy will generate funds necessary to cover expenditures needed to operate the Boat Wash on an annual basis. We believe this to be a logical, efficient, and strategic solution.

## **HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS? WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO SOLVING THIS PROBLEM?**

As mentioned earlier, since 2005 several key data points have been tracked which support the success and critical mission of the Boat Wash. This data shows rapidly increasing numbers in all categories. In 2021 there were 14 watercraft where Eurasian watermilfoil was removed. These boats came from neighboring lakes. Had the milfoil not been detected and removed, it could have had disastrous ramifications for the lake. "Bait transfers" are another item flagged at the Boat Wash. When fishermen catch bait from a lake and transfer it to another lake, contamination can occur, thus a law is in place to prohibit such practices.

Our staff biologist, scientists and volunteers regularly take water samples to monitor items such as water quality, organism DNA, phosphorous, heavy metals, and much more. Acquiring such detailed historic data from both the Boat Wash and scientific research is extraordinary. Our aquatic monitoring efforts to obtain this data have protected the lake for decades and will enable early detection and rapid response to any future challenges we could encounter. Being prepared is the key! This keen sense of preparation continues to set GLA apart from most Watersheds in the State.

## **RECOGNITION**

For those contributors who are interested in recognition, we look forward to working with you to achieve appropriate, visible acknowledgment of your generosity. Recognition could include:

- Complimentary Discovery Boat Tours
- Recognition in GLA digital and print media
- Recognition at GLA's Annual Membership Meeting

## **CONCLUSION**

Fortunately, GLA is well versed in environmental science, is attuned to the regional Watershed activity, and has a pro-active track record resulting in the Glen Lake/Crystal River Watershed maintaining its CLARITY and PRISTINE quality. With riparians philanthropically joining together now, we believe upgrading equipment, appropriate increased compensation for Boat Wash attendants, and education on GLA's exemplary Boat Wash program, will significantly upgrade our first line of defense, enabling us to accommodate population growth and ensure safeguards are in place for our water to remain CLEAR and BLUE for many generations to come.